ALDINE SUPPLEMENTARY READERS

THAT'S WHY STORIES

CATHERINE T. BRYCE

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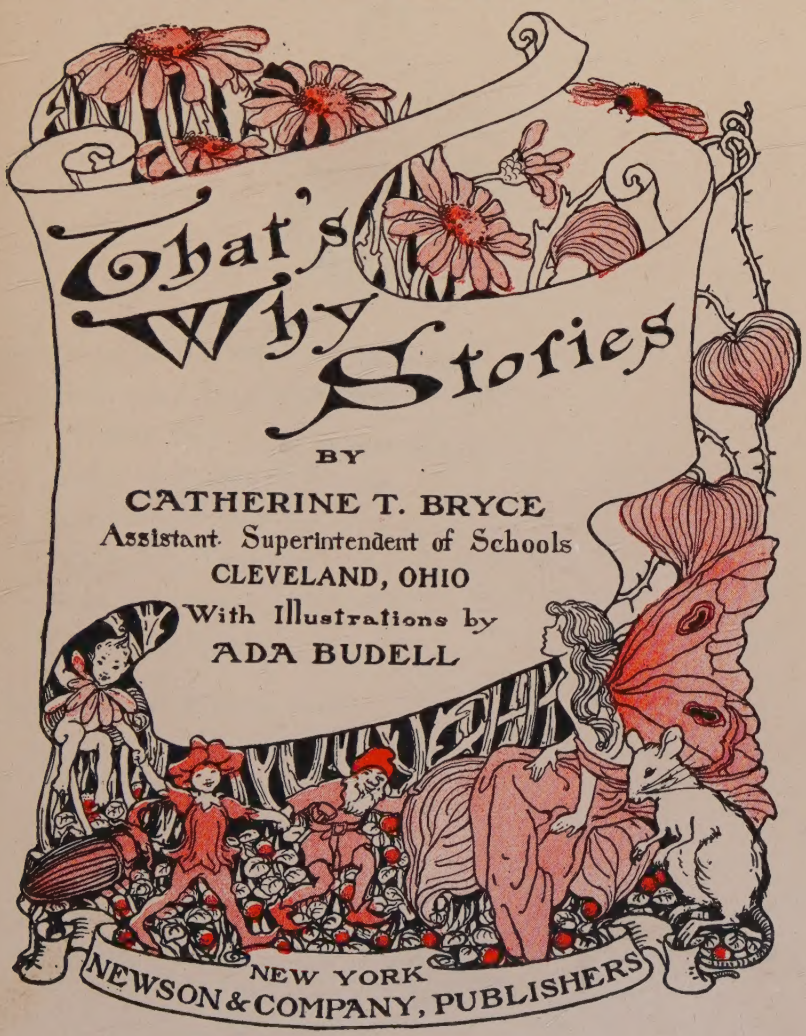

That's Why Stories

BY

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With Illustrations by
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The Book
of
Beginnings
A.B.

THE snow lay deep upon the ground. The cold wind blew. The leafless branches of the great trees swayed and groaned.

A little child stood shivering in the snow. She looked on the cold snow-covered earth. She looked up at the cold gray sky. Then she began to weep bitterly.

An angel saw the poor child. He felt sorry for her. He flew to comfort her.

"Why do you weep, my child?" he said.

Without looking up the child sobbed: "Oh, the winter is so cold! It is so long! I am sure the beautiful spring will never come!"

"Look up, my child," said the angel.

Slowly the little maid raised her eyes to the angel's face. When she saw the

wonderful light on his face, she was frightened. She would have fallen, but the angel stretched out his hand.

"Do not be afraid, my child," he said. "I have come to comfort you."

As he spoke a snowflake fell on his hand.

"See this snowflake," he said. "It shall change to a flower before your eyes."

He shook the snowflake from his hand. As it touched the ground, it turned into a sweet white flower.

The child looked at it in wonder.

She quite forgot her fear of the angel as she looked at the dainty white flower.

"Every spring this little white flower shall blossom on the earth," said the angel. "It will come to tell you that no matter how long and cold the winter may be, the sweet spring will surely come. So be glad, little maiden, and weep no more."

As he said this, the angel flew away. But where he had stood there sprang up a ring of fair white flowers.

The little maiden stood and looked at them. A sweet smile chased away the tears.

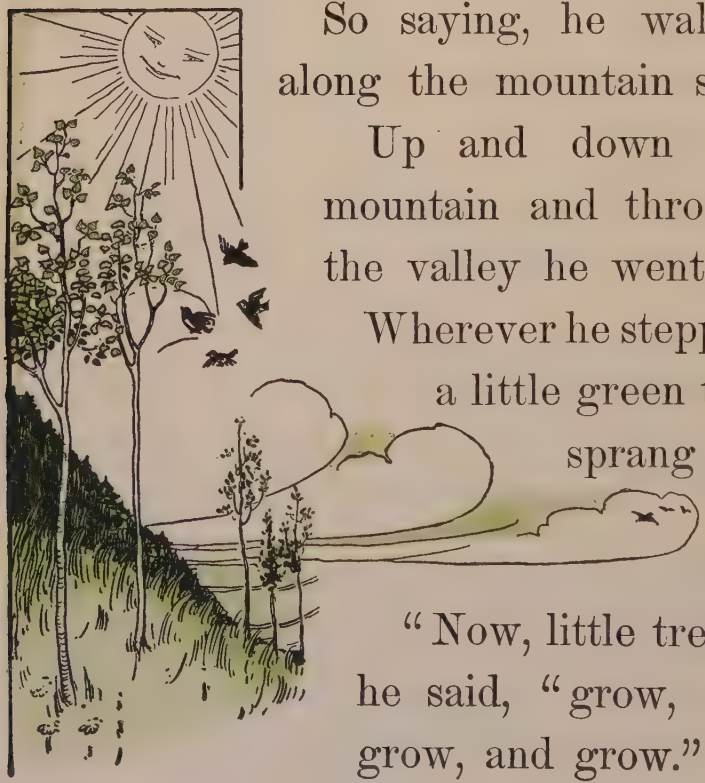
"How beautiful!" she said. "I will be glad, for I know the spring will soon be here."

And that is how we got our first dainty snowdrops.

THE FIRST BIRDS

MANY, many hundreds of moons ago, the Great Spirit visited the earth. He stood on the top of a high mountain and looked all around him.

"How fair and beautiful the earth is!" he said. "It would be more beautiful if there were more trees."



So saying, he walked along the mountain side. Up and down the mountain and through the valley he went. Wherever he stepped, a little green tree sprang up.

"Now, little trees," he said, "grow, and grow, and grow."

All summer the Great Spirit watched over the little trees. He sent the cool rains that they might have water to drink. He sent the warm sun to shine upon them. The little trees grew nearer and nearer to the sky.

At last the autumn came. Then the trees became more beautiful. Their leaves turned to red and gold. They dropped from the trees and were blown about by the wind.

The Great Spirit looked at them.

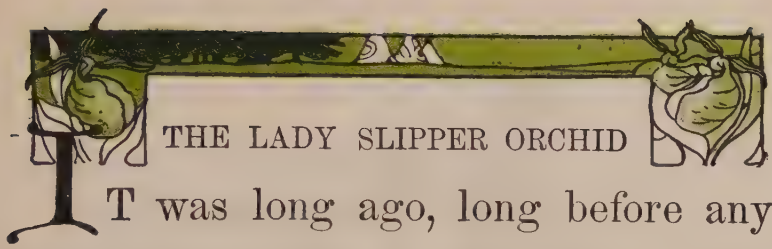
"How lovely they are!" he said. "They are too beautiful to die. How can I save them?"

The Great Spirit thought and

thought. Then he breathed softly upon the leaves, and what do you think happened?

The bright leaves were changed into beautiful birds. Up into the air they flew, singing glad songs of praise.

And that is how we got our first birds.

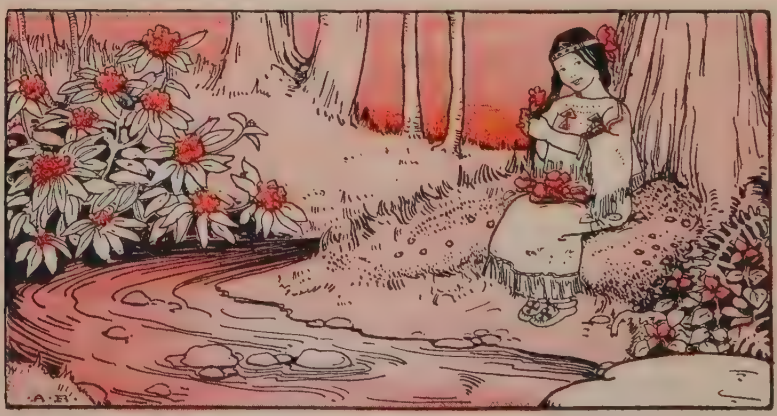


THE LADY SLIPPER ORCHID

IT was long ago, long before any white men lived in our land. Only the Indians lived in their wigwams by the streams and hunted in the forests.

Winona was an Indian princess. So tiny was she that when she stood beside her father, her little head but reached that mighty chief's elbow. But so dainty and pretty was the little maid, and so kind and gentle, that all the people loved her. The grimmest old warrior looked kindly on the little princess as she flitted among the wigwams.

One bright spring morning, Winona walked through the forest. The birds were singing as they built their nests, and Winona sang with them. She, too, was glad the long cold winter was over and beautiful spring had come back to the woods. The May-flowers were fresh and sweet, dressed in their glossy green leaves. And



our little Indian maiden was just as fair and bright in her pretty soft dress of deerskin.

Winona picked the sweet blossoms, and sitting down beside the brook began weaving them in her long hair.

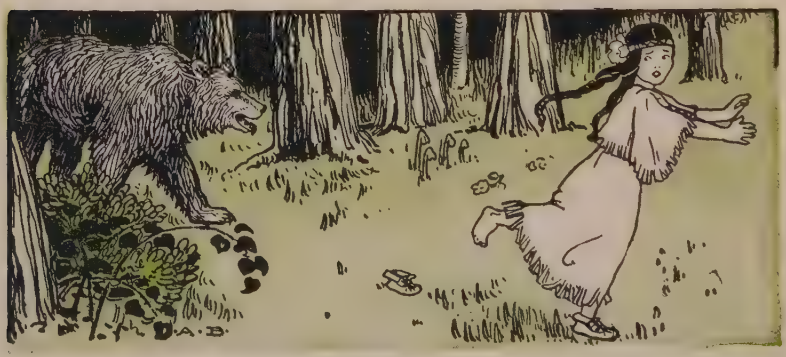
"Grr—! Grr—!" growled a deep voice.

"What is that?" cried the wee maiden, springing to her feet in terror.

"Grr—! Grr—! Grr—!" came the growl once more, this time nearer and louder than before.

"The bear! the ever hungry bear!" cried Winona. "Whither shall I flee?"

Through the woods ran the little maiden. In her haste she crushed the sweet blossoms under her feet. The brambles tore her dress. The flowers dropped from her long braids. But she heeded not. On and on she rushed. As she ran one of her moccasins fell off.



At last, breathless and almost dead with fright, she came to the edge of

the forest. What was her joy to see her father and some of his young braves coming towards her!

"What is the matter? Speak!" cried her father.

"The bear! the hungry bear!" gasped Winona.

"We have come to hunt him," cried the braves. "Where, where is he?"

Winona pointed to the forest, then fainted at her father's feet.

"Look up! Look up, my child," said the old chief. "Do not fear. The young braves of our tribe have gone after the bear. Soon they will return with him."

Even as he spoke, they heard the hunter's song from the forest:—

"We have sought the hungry bear!
We have met the hungry bear!
We have slain the hungry bear!
The bear, the great bear, is no more!"

Then Winona sat up.

"Where is your moccasin?" asked the old chief.

"I have lost it in the forest as I ran from the bear. I will go back and look for it."

Long Winona searched for her moccasin, and the young braves helped her. But no moccasin could they find.

"Behold! see what I have found!" cried a young brave.

Winona, the chief, and the other braves gathered around him. In his hand he held a strange pink flower. Such a flower had never been seen on the earth before. Where could it have come from?

"See," said the brave, "it is shaped just like an Indian moccasin."

"So it is," cried all the others.

"It is Winona's moccasin," said the wise old chief. "The Manitou of the forest has found Winona's moccasin, and changed it into this strange flower."

Whether this is true or not, I cannot say. But Winona never found her moccasin of deerskin. And every year

the strange flower returns to the forest. The Indians call it the moccasin flower. The white men call it the lady slipper orchid.

THE MOUNTAIN ASH

ODIN, the king of the gods, had a beautiful cup. It was made of bright shining gold. Around it were set sparkling gems. Never in the world has there been such a beautiful cup as Odin's. Every day he drank from it;

and every day he felt happy to think he had such a fine cup.

But one day when he called for his cup, his servants rushed in with white faces.

"It is gone! Your beautiful cup is gone!" they cried.

"Gone!" said Odin. "What do you mean?"

"It has been stolen," cried all the people.

They all stood and looked at one another. Every one knew who had done this wicked deed.

At last Odin spoke. "No one but the wicked dwarfs that live under the

ground would steal my cup," he said.

All the people nodded their heads. They knew that this was so.

"Now," said Odin, "how shall we get it back? Who will go to the underworld for my golden cup?"

No one answered. They were all afraid, for well they knew that the dwarfs would kill any one who tried to get back the cup.

"Is there no one brave enough to go?" asked Odin.

"I will," said the eagle.

"Then," said Odin, "I call you the bravest of animals."

The eagle flew down to the under-

world. He soon saw the cup, for the gems sparkled brightly in the dark. Quickly he seized it in his talons and flew away.

But the dwarfs had seen him.

Out of their caves they came swarming.

They seized sharp

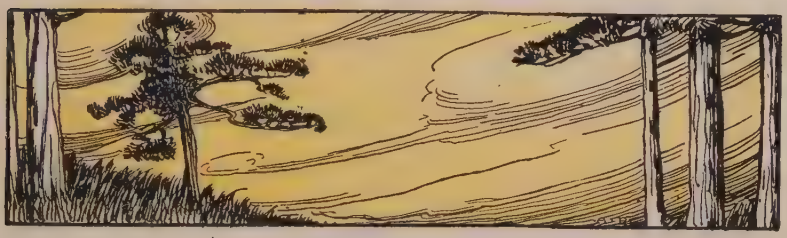
rocks and threw them at the eagle. Many of them hit him. This the dwarfs knew, for drops of blood and feathers fell thick and fast to the earth.

Still the brave bird flew on,— up, up, up. At last he reached Odin's throne. He dropped the cup in Odin's lap, then fell to the ground dead.

"Truly," said Odin, "he was the bravest of animals."

The eagle's brave deed can never be forgotten, for wherever a feather and a drop of blood fell a beautiful tree sprang up. Its leaves look like feathers. On it grow bright red berries, like drops of blood.

We know how this tree came on the earth. But people who did not know this story called it the mountain ash.



THE SIGHING PINE TREE

A LONG, long time ago, a little pine tree lived in a great forest. This forest was in a far-away country.

The little pine tree was very happy. Many tall brothers grew around it. All day they held up their heads and sang in the sunshine.

Sometimes a great storm swept through the forest. But the little pine and its brothers did not fear. They danced in the wind. They sang louder than ever.

"Ho, ho, ho! old wind," they cried. "You cannot break us. We bend before your blasts. The harder you blow, the louder we laugh. Ho, ho, ho! Bend, brothers, bend before the mighty wind."

One day, a stranger came into the forest.

"What beautiful trees!" he said. "I never saw any like them before. They are so tall and straight, and they sing so sweetly."

When the trees heard this, they were glad and sang their sweetest, softest tunes for the stranger. But his next words filled them with alarm.

"I must take one of them to my home away across the seas."

"Oh, do not take me! Do not take me!" cried every tree. But the stranger did not know what they said. He did not even know that they were talking. He thought they were still singing.

"I shall take this smallest one," he said. "It will be easiest to move."

How the pine trees cried and bent their tall heads! "Alas! alas!

alas!" they sighed. "Our dear little brother! Oh, do not take him away from us!"

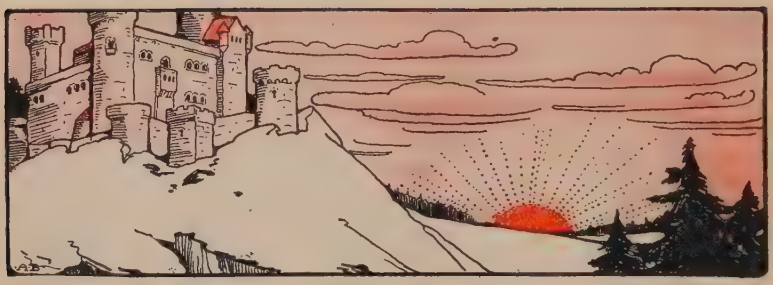
But the stranger did not hear them.

Very carefully he took the little pine tree from its soil. He carried it away across the seas, and planted it in a beautiful new land.

Here the birds sang to it, and the wind rocked it as of old. But the little tree was, oh, so homesick! It no longer sang. All its soft sweet songs were changed to sighs.

The little pine tree has grown to be a great old tree. But still when the

wind blows, you can hear it and its children sighing for their own forest in the far-away land.



WHY THE ROBIN SAYS "CHEER-UP"

I

IT was long ago, when the world was almost young. Away in the Northlands snow and ice covered the ground. Cold winds blew and drove the snow and sleet into people's faces. The sun had not shone for months.

But the people were brave and said, "Never mind, the spring will surely come." So they made great fires, and kept busy and happy.

Yet day after day passed, and the spring did not return. "I think it is getting colder," grumbled one old man.

"The spring will never come," said another.

"We shall all die of the cold," said a third.

So one after another began to grumble, and soon most of the people grew very unhappy. Then a dreadful sickness broke out, and many of them died.

Now among the people was one who never complained. This was the king's daughter, the little Princess Heart's-ease. Every day and all day long, she went from house to house, cheering the

sad, nursing the sick, and comforting those in sorrow.

"Be brave, only be brave," she said, "and the spring will surely come."

But one sad day, little Princess Heart's-ease did not visit the sick. She lay on her little white bed, tossing and moaning with pain. She, too, had been stricken with the great sickness.

Many loving friends watched beside her, while the bright happy child grew weaker and weaker. "She will die!" sobbed all the people.

"If the spring and the warm weather will only come," said the court doctor, "our Princess Heart's-ease may live."

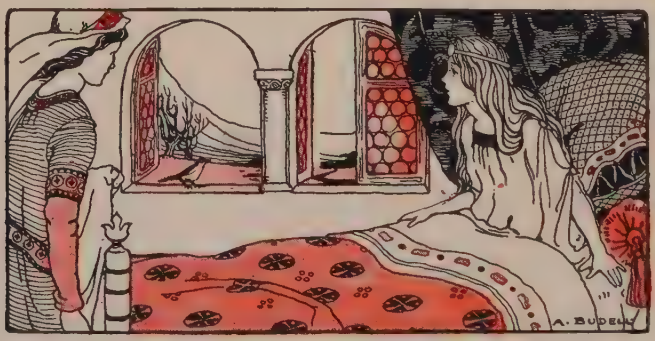
II

Away in the south the spring was very busy. She knew she was late this year, and it made her very sad. She did want to get to the Northland so much! But she just could not, till she had finished her work in the south.

One morning, she called all her birds to her and said: "My dear children, I am afraid the people in the Northland are very sad. They will think I have forgotten them. Will one of you fly to them and tell them I am surely coming?"

"I will! I will!" sang Robin Redbreast, and away he flew.

When he reached the Northland, he found all the people in deep sorrow. Little Princess Heart's-ease was dying, they thought. Straight to the king's palace flew Robin. Right well he knew the window of the little princess' room! Lighting on the sill,



he sang, oh! so sweetly: "Cheer-up! Cheer-up! Cheer-up!"

"Listen," whispered the little prin-

cess. "I hear a robin. Open the window." Softly the window was opened, and Robin sang on: "Cheer-up! Cheer-up! Cheer-up!"

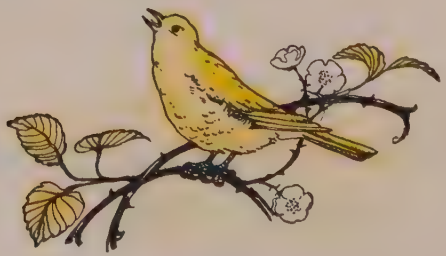
"I will cheer up, Robin," said Princess Heart's-ease. "I know what you mean. Spring is on the way. Is she not, you brave little bird?"

As she spoke, the first mild spring breeze sighed through the window. "It smells of violets," said Princess Heart's-ease. "The long, cold, dark winter is over. Beautiful spring is here again."

In a few weeks, spring had made the earth beautiful once more. Birds

sang in the leafy trees. The skies were soft and blue. Princess Heart's-ease and all the people grew happy and strong again. And how they did love the little Robin who had cheered them so much!

"Never fear!" said spring. "I shall always return. And that you may know I am on the way, I shall send Robin every year to tell you I am coming and to sing his glad 'Cheer-up! Cheer-up!'"



THE WHITE RABBIT

"MOTHER," said Will, "my teacher says that before any white men came to America the Indians lived here."

"That is true, my boy," said mother, looking up from her sewing and smiling. She knew from Will's tone that he had something more to say. So she waited for his next words.

"Well, mother, I've been wondering who lived here before the Indians did," said Will.

"That is a question I cannot answer," said mother. "But if you wish, I will tell you the story that the mothers of one tribe of Indians tell their little sons, when they ask the same question."

"Oh, do, mother!" said Will, and he brought his chair over close to mother's.

"A long, long time ago," began mother, "there were no people living on the earth, — nothing but plants and animals. Now it happened that a great many white rabbits lived in their burrows in a great field.

"One morning, a little white rabbit

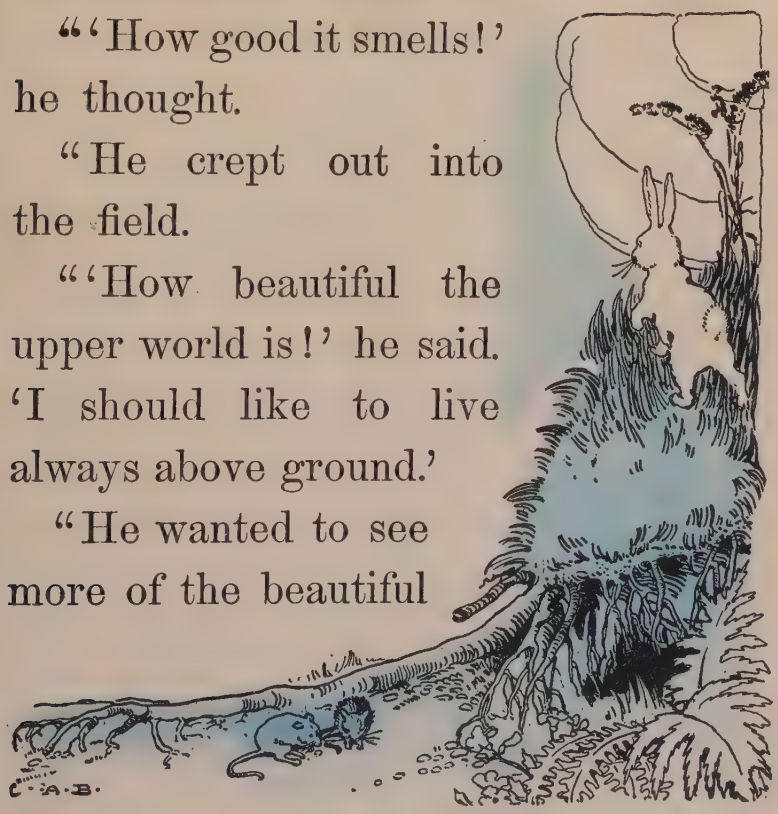
crawled through his burrow to the door that led into the upper world. He sniffed the fresh air.

"'How good it smells!' he thought.

"He crept out into the field.

"'How beautiful the upper world is!' he said. 'I should like to live always above ground.'

"He wanted to see more of the beautiful



world, so he stood upright on his hind legs.

"'How far I can see!' he sighed. 'I wish I might always walk upright. Then I could see more and more of the lovely upper world.'

"Now the Great Manitou happened to be near the little rabbit, and he heard every wish that he made.

"'Little white rabbit,' he said, 'because you see the beauty of the upper world and love it, you shall live in it always. And upright you shall walk through my lovely earth.'

"So saying, he touched the little white rabbit, and lo! he was no longer

a rabbit, but an Indian,—the first Indian ever made.

"'Because you came from a rabbit, you shall take the white rabbit as the sign of your tribe,' said Manitou. 'Because you wished to walk upright, you shall bow to none but the Great Spirit.'

"And that is how the Indians came to live on the earth. That is why they walk so straight. And that is why they would rather die than become the servant of any man."

"Do all the Indians believe that, mother?" asked Will.

"No, only one tribe. Each tribe has

its own story. Some day I hope you will know them all. That is the only one I have time to tell you to-day. So run out-doors and play with your little friend."

"Yes, mother, and we will play the story of the White Rabbit."

The Elf and Flower Folk
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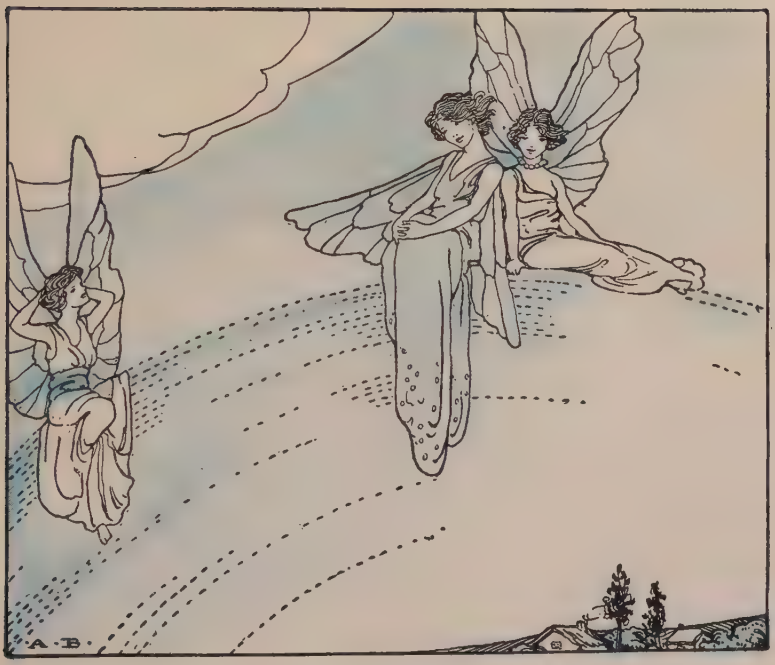


THE RAINBOW FAIRIES

THIS is the story that old Mrs. Bunny told to her grandson, Bunny No-Tail.

"One morning, Bunny Pink-Eyes woke up feeling very thirsty.

"'Dear me!' he said, 'I never was so thirsty in my life before. I must go to the spring at once.'

"So off he started over the grass, hoppity, hoppity, hop! Soon he came to the spring. But he might just as well have stayed at home. The spring was dry. Poor Bunny almost cried."

"But if he had cried, grandmother, he could have had the tears to drink," said little Bunny No-Tail.

"Don't be foolish, child," answered grandmother. "Bunny Pink-Eyes had more sense than that. He knew there was no use of staying there, so he

flapped his ears, and started off for the river.

"But the river was, oh, so far away! And the sun was so hot! And Bunny was so thirsty! It seemed as if he couldn't live till he got to the river.

"All at once, he saw something sparkling on the grass.

"'Drops of water!' he cried. 'Not many, to be sure, but enough to give me a mouthful of water at least.'

"He hopped up to the drops of water, and was just sticking out his tongue to get them when he heard some one cry: —

"'Don't, please don't swallow them!'

"Bunny looked up in surprise. Then, tripping over the grass, he saw ever so many beautiful little fairies. They wore beautiful dresses of rainbow colors.

"'Why should I not drink these

drops of water?' asked Bunny, as the fairies stopped before him.

"'Oh, they are not drops of water!' cried the fairies. 'They are our diamonds. See how they sparkle! Are they not the colors of our dresses? We are the rainbow fairies.'

"Bunny looked again. Sure enough, the drops did shine with all the colors of the rainbow.

"'Take your diamonds,' he said. 'I would rather have a nice cool drink than all the diamonds in the world.'

"He turned away and began to limp slowly towards the river, while

the rainbow fairies gathered their lost diamonds.

"'Come back, Bunny!' called the most beautiful fairy. 'Because you gave us back our diamonds, we will do something for you.'

"The fairy whispered a few words to the other fairies. They began to fly softly over the grass and as they flew, they dropped from their tiny fingers what Bunny thought were more diamonds.

"'Here, Bunny!' called the beautiful fairy. 'Here is water for you. Sweet, clear water that sparkles just like our diamonds. Every night we

will sprinkle the meadow for you. In the morning, when you drink it, remember your friends, the rainbow fairies.'

"As soon as she stopped speaking, the fairies flew away. But every morning since then the grass is covered with fresh water for all the bunnies to drink."

"Do you mean dew, grandmother?" asked little Bunny No-Tail.

"Yes, I believe that some people call it dew. But that's all they know about it, honey."

THE FOUR-LEAF CLOVER

ONCE upon a time there lived a man who had no luck at all. At least, that is what he always said. But let me tell you something. His barn burned down because he carelessly dropped a lighted match upon the hay. His horse went lame because he forgot to get a new shoe for it. An old fox stole all his chickens because he was

too lazy to mend the henhouse. His crops failed because he didn't attend to them. So you see that the trouble was not want of luck, but laziness.

Well, things kept growing worse and worse. You never saw such a poor-looking farm! The barns were burned, the cattle dead, the fences down, and the garden overgrown with weeds.

At last the man said to his friends: "I can stay here no longer. I shall go out into the world and seek my fortune."

So off he started and walked to the nearest town. He soon got work, but bless you! he was still lazy and soon lost it.

He wandered from town to town, but still he never had any luck. So instead of getting rich, he grew poorer and poorer. His clothes became ragged; his shoes wore out.

"My luck is just as bad here as at home," he said. "But there, at least, I had a house to sleep in. I will go back."

So back over all the long miles he tramped. How glad he was to see his old home again! He sat down on the doorstep to rest.

"I don't believe there is any good luck in the world," he said.

"Oh, yes, there is," said a sweet voice.

The man started and looked up. He thought he was alone. What was his surprise to see a lovely fairy standing before him!

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am the Good Luck Fairy," she

answered. "I have watched you for a long time. Now I have come to give you another chance to win your luck."

"Oh, I will do anything, if only I can have good luck," cried the man. "Tell me how to get it."

"Listen carefully then," said the fairy. "There are three things you must do if you would have good luck come and stay with you. I shall leave a good-luck sign with you so that you may always remember what they are."

The fairy looked around. At her feet grew some green clover.

"See this little clover," she said,

pointing to one. "It has three leaves. Each leaf tells you something. The first says, 'Be brave'; the second says, 'Love all creatures, great and small'; the third says, 'Work if you wish to have good luck.'"

Again the fairy touched the clover and another leaf grew out.

"See," she said, "this is a four-leaf clover. The fourth leaf is for luck. Pick this four-leaf clover and carry it over your heart. I promise you that as long as you are brave, loving, and busy, you shall have good luck."

The sun was going down behind the hills when the man opened his eyes.

The fairy had gone.

"How late it is!" he said. "I must have been asleep and dreaming."

As he spoke he looked down at the grass. Could he believe his eyes! Right beside his foot grew a little four-leaf clover!

He stooped and picked it. Softly he touched each leaf, saying to himself: "'Be brave;' — 'be loving;' — 'work;' — 'for good luck.' I will obey my good-luck sign."

From that day he carried his four-leaf clover. Whenever he grew tired, he took it out and looked at it. Then

he went on his way, doing his very best work. And he always had good luck.

And now you know how we got the first four-leaf clover, and you also know what you must do if you want it to bring you good luck.

THE FIREFLY

ONCE, in the long before time, the queen of the fairies was in great trouble. She had lost a gem from her crown.

That you may know why this troubled the queen and all the other fairies, I must tell you about this gem.

It was a most beautiful pink gem. And it was set right in the middle of the crown. Now, any one would be sorry to lose this gem, it was so lovely. But wait, I have not told you the worst.

You know that at midnight when you are fast asleep in bed, the fairies are awake. Don't you? And did you know that every night in summer they dance in the green meadows?

Well, when the moon is bright, they have plenty of light for their dancing.

But on dark nights, how do you think they see?

The beautiful pink gem in the queen's crown gives them light, — such a soft, pink light.

But the strange thing about the gem is this, — it will not give light unless

it is in the fairy queen's crown. At all other times it is just a dull, pink stone.

Now you know why the queen and her people were troubled. Unless they found the gem, they could have no more midnight dances except when the moon was full. And worse than this, they could not find their way back to fairyland without the light of the pink stone.

All the fairies hunted and hunted for the gem. But it was a dark, dark night and they could not find it.

"Oh, will no one bring a light?" cried the queen. "The night is nearly

over, and if we are here in our ball dresses when the sun rises, we shall be turned into flowers."

A little beetle flew to the queen.

"I will get you a light, O Queen," he said.

Off he flew to the other side of the woods. Some gypsies were camping there and they had a little fire. The beetle picked up a small spark. How it burned! He had to drop it.

"I must get one," he said. "I promised the queen I would get it."

So saying, he picked up another spark. It burned worse than the first. But the brave beetle would not let it drop.

Right through the woods and back into the meadow he flew.

"A light! A light!" cried the fairies. "We shall soon find our queen's pink gem."

The beetle flew all over the meadow, carrying the spark. The fairies followed, hunting in the grass.

Soon a glad shout was heard. "We have found it! We have found it!"

Quickly the pink stone was set in the queen's crown, and the whole meadow was filled with its soft light.

Then the queen turned to thank the brave beetle. But alas! there at her feet he lay, unable to fly, he was so badly burned.

The fairy queen touched him with her wand. At once he was cured of his burns.

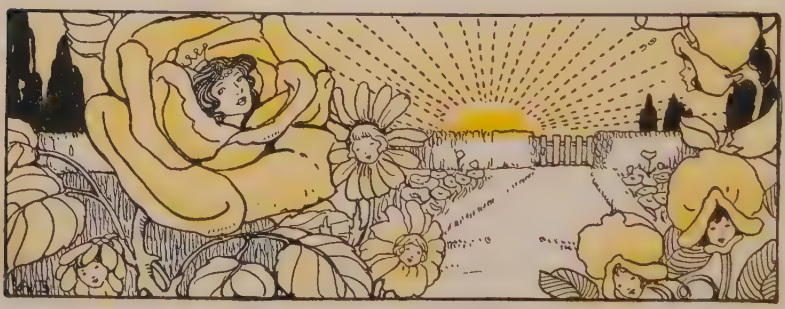
"My brave beetle," said the queen, "we thank you for finding our stone. As a reward for your bravery, we shall make you our light-bearer."

Again she touched him with her wand, and he became a firefly, — the first firefly in the world.

"Every night," said the queen, "when we come to earth to dance, you shall

come with us. Then if the pink stone is lost we shall have no fear. We know that it will soon be found."

And now you know why the fire-fly and his children fly through the meadows on summer nights.



A FLOWER LEGEND

ONCE, in the long ago time, the angel of the flowers came to earth to visit them.

First she visited a great, red rose. It was so beautiful that it filled the angel's heart with joy.

"Dear Rose," she said, "is there anything you wish to make you more happy?"

"Oh, yes!" answered the rose.

"Tell me your wish and I shall grant it," said the angel.

"You see how very beautiful I am," said the rose. "Every one who comes along and sees my beauty wants to pick me. Please give me some sharp thorns, so that I may punish those who try to carry me from my home."

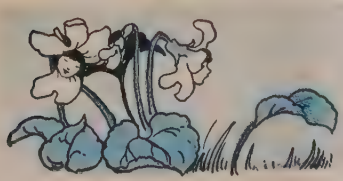
This wish displeased the angel. But

because she had promised, she had to grant it; and ever since, roses have had thorns.

Next the fairy went to the home of the violet.

"And you, little Violet, what wish shall I grant you?" she asked.

The violet thought a moment, then she said: "I love my quiet home in the woods. The tall trees shelter me. The little brooks give me cool water to drink. I have no wish but to live quietly in my lovely, woodland home."



And the violet still lives content in the woods.

In the fields, the angel found the daisy.

"Dear Daisy," she said, "what wish shall I grant you?"

The daisy answered: "I love the day and the bright sunshine.

"The darkness of night fills me with

fears. So pray grant that I may sleep through the dark night, when the dear little children sleep, and waken with them to the glad light of day."

"Your wish is granted," said the angel. And ever since, the daisy has closed her eye at night, and opened it to greet the children in the morning.

Hidden away in her soft leaves, the angel found a purple pansy.

"Little Pansy," she said, "what wish shall I grant you?"

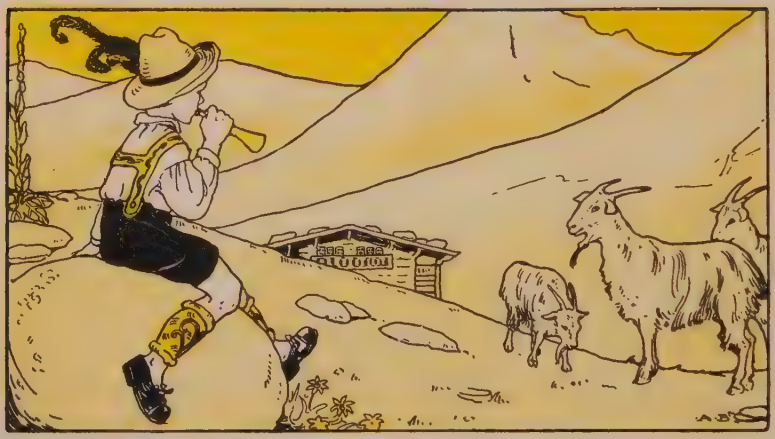
The little pansy answered: "Even hidden away in my quiet corner, I hear that there is sorrow in the world. I would comfort those who are sad, but I am

afraid I am too little to do anything so good and great."

"Bless you, little Pansy," said the angel. "You only think of others. Hereafter you shall be called Heart's-ease, and you shall comfort whoever looks upon you."

Then she stooped and kissed the little pansy. "Dear Pansy," she said, "the work you have chosen is an angel's work, so you shall have an angel's face."

That is how the pansy got its sweet face. And to this day people love the pansy, and many still call it, "Heart's-ease."



THE FORGET-ME-NOT

AWAY across the ocean lived Hans, a little goatherd. He and his mother lived alone in a little house at the foot of a high mountain.

While his mother worked in the house or in the little garden, Hans led his goats up the mountain and watched them as they ate the sweet grass.

At evening when Hans had driven the goats home and his mother had finished her work, they rested before the bright fire in their nice, clean, little house. This was the time that Hans liked best. For often his mother told him fine stories while she knitted and he carved some pretty wooden toy to sell in the village.

One of the stories he liked best was about a little, gray plant. This little, gray plant, said his mother, grew on the very highest peak of the mountain. The fairy king had planted it there. When boiled in water, it would cure all sickness. But no one could find

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it unless he was brave and good. Many people had tried, but all had given up, because the way to the highest peak was so long and tiresome.

One night when Hans came home, he found his mother very ill. He did everything he could think of to make her feel better, but she grew worse and worse.

"I will go for the little, gray plant," said Hans. "I will start in the morning as soon as it is light."

"No, no, my child," said his mother. "Do not go. The plant is covered deep under ice and snow. You know

the highest peak is always covered with snow. I am afraid you will die on the cold, white mountain."

"Do not fear, mother," said Hans. "I know I shall find the plant. Do let me try."

At last his mother gave her consent. So, early in the morning, having asked a neighbor to stay with his mother, Hans began to climb the mountain.

At first the way was easy. He had climbed it often with his goats. But after a while the mountain grew very steep and there was no path. Still on and on he climbed. Once

he almost stopped. That was when he saw a lovely blue flower. It grew right out of the rock and was so pretty! It almost seemed to say, "Pick me, Hans; pick me."

But Hans said: "I cannot stop to pick flowers now. I must hurry and find the little, gray plant. I will pick you when I come back."

As he hurried up the mountain, he thought he heard the little, blue flower say, "Forget me not."

"No, I'll not forget you," said Hans; "but first I must find the little, gray plant."

And now Hans came to the highest peak. How cold it was! How deep the snow!

Hans went right to work. He pushed the snow to right and left with his little, bare hands, and looked and looked for the little, gray plant. It grew colder and colder. It seemed as if his hands would freeze, but still he kept on searching.

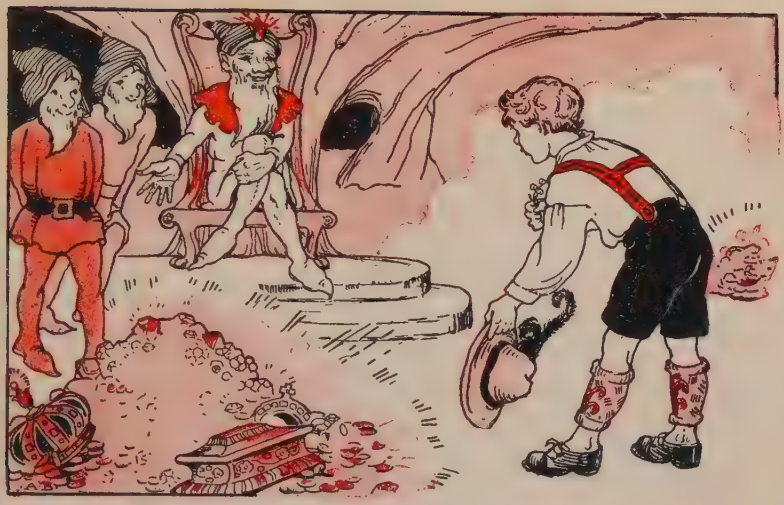
And when he did find the little, gray plant, how he shouted for joy! He jumped and clapped his hands till he became quite warm. Then he gathered the little, gray plant, and putting it carefully in his pocket, ran down the mountain.

But Hans did not forget the pretty, blue flower. "Now I may pick it," he said. And he ran to where it grew.

As he took hold of the stem to break it, the strangest thing happened. A great door opened right into the mountain.

"Do not be afraid, Hans," said the little, blue flower. "Walk right in, only carry me in your hand."

In through the door walked Hans. And what a sight met his eyes! He found himself in a great cave. On the floor were heaps and heaps of gold and jewels.



A little, brown dwarf sat on a golden throne at one end of the cave. Hans bowed low before him.

"Help yourself, Hans," said the dwarf. "This treasure is all mine, and I give you all you can carry, because you are so kind and brave."

Hans thanked the dwarf and then filled all his pockets and even his hat with gold and gems. As he was leaving the cave, he heard a little voice say, "Forget me not, Hans."

Hans turned and picked up the little blue flower. Then he walked out of the cave, and the great door closed behind him.

Hans ran all the rest of the way home. The little gray plant was boiled, and as soon as the mother had taken it, she became well again. Then Hans showed her all his gold and jewels, and told her how he had found them.

"It is well," said his mother, "that

you carried the little blue flower from the elf's cave. If you had forgotten it, the gold and gems would have turned to rocks."

"Then all our luck came from the little flower," said Hans. "Let us plant it in our garden and call it 'The Forget-me-not.'"

THE ELF'S FLOWER

IN a little hut in a forest lived a widow with her three sons. The

mother made baskets of reeds. These she carried to a town on the other side of the forest and sold. In this way she earned enough money to buy food and clothing for herself and her sons.

The oldest son was a great help to his mother. He cut the reeds for the baskets and helped her carry them to town. Many a time she said: "Oh, Peter, my son, how could I ever live without you! You are such a good son!"

The other boys were lazy. They never helped their mother. Often she said, "Oh, Hans and Carl, whatever will become of you!"

One morning the mother called the boys to her. "My sons," she said, "I am ill—very ill, I fear. I can make no more baskets. What shall we do?"

"Who will buy us bread?" asked Hans and Carl. "We shall starve!" And the selfish boys began to cry.

"Cheer up, mother," answered Peter. "I will take care of you. I know how to make baskets and I will work just as hard as I can."

But Peter had to take care of his sick mother, for his selfish brothers would not stay with her. So he could not go for the reeds. His brothers brought in a few, but they

said it made them tired, and soon stopped bringing any. Soon the little money they had was spent, and one night when Hans and Carl came home, there was no supper on the table.

"Where is our supper?" they called to Peter.

"There is not a piece of bread in the house, nor have I a penny left to buy more," answered Peter.

Then how frightened Hans and Carl were. They wished they had not been quite so lazy. They sat in a corner crying, while Peter tried to cheer their poor mother.

"Tinkle! tinkle! tinkle!" sounded a

tiny bell. The family looked around in surprise, but could see no one.

"Tinkle! tinkle! tinkle!" sounded the bell again. This time it seemed to be just back of Peter. He turned around. There stood the queerest little elf in the world. His face was bright and smiling. On his head he wore a

cap of pure gold. His hair was long and white. He was dressed in a bright green suit, and long, pointed green shoes. To the toe of each shoe was fastened a tiny silver bell. When he walked they tinkled and made the sweetest music.

Peter was so surprised he just stood and stared at his strange visitor.

"Well, what do you think of me, Peter?" asked the wee man, and he danced lightly over the floor to the music of his silver bells.

Without waiting for an answer — and, to tell the truth, Peter was too surprised to talk — the elf went on.

"I have watched you for a long time, Peter. I am glad you are such a good son. To-night I have come to help you. Do you know the grassy meadow on the other side of the forest?"

"Yes," answered Peter.

"Well, go there at sunrise for the next three mornings and you will find the meadow covered with gold pieces. Take all you want. They are yours."

"Tinkle! tinkle! tinkle!" sounded the bells, and before Peter could wink, the elf was gone.

"Oh, Peter!" cried Hans, "I will go to-morrow!"

"No, let me go," said Carl. "I can carry more gold than Hans."

Peter thought a minute. He wanted to go himself, but he also wanted to please his brothers.

At last he said: "We will all have a chance to gather the elf's gold. Hans, you are the youngest, so you may go to-morrow. Carl may go the next morning, and I will go last. But remember,—we must be in the meadow at sunrise. Can you get there so early?"

"Of course," said Hans. "I will sleep in the woods all night and be in the meadow before the sun rises."

"Good," said Peter. "Carl and I will do the same when our turns come."

Hans said good-by to his mother and brothers and walked whistling into the forest. They were all so happy that they quite forgot they had to go to bed without supper.

Next morning the little family looked for Hans' return. But no Hans came. The morning passed, then the afternoon. Just as it was growing dark, they saw Hans walking slowly towards the house.

"Hans! Hans! Did you get the gold? Why are you so late?" they called.

"No, I didn't get the gold," answered Hans. "I was so tired, walking so far last night, that I slept until after noon. Then I ran to the meadow. But not a gold piece could I find, and I'm tired and hungry."

"Oh, Hans!" said Peter, "you know the elf said we must be in the meadow at sunrise. Carl, can I trust you to be in time to-morrow?"

"Of course," said Carl. "I will start off at once."

Peter stood at the door, watching

Carl as he went into the woods. "I do hope he will be in time," he thought. "If he is late, poor mother will die for want of food."

The next day, a little after noon, Carl came running through the woods carrying a basket.

"Oh, Carl, did you find the gold?" called Peter and Hans.

"No, I found no gold. I overslept and did not get to the meadow until an hour after sunrise. There was no gold to be seen, only a few pieces of silver. I took them to town and bought this basket of food."

"I am glad you thought of the food,"

said Peter, as he took the basket from his brother. "But I am sorry you were not in the meadow at sunrise."

"So am I, Peter," answered Carl. "I will try after this to help you all I can."

After giving his sick mother some food and telling Carl just what to do for her while he was away, Peter took a large bag and went off into the forest. When he came to the edge near the meadow, he lay down under a large tree. But you may be sure he slept very little. He was so afraid that he would not be in the meadow in time.

Next morning when the sun rose over the meadow, there stood Peter,

bag in hand. And what a sight he beheld! The meadow was just covered with shining gold pieces!

"Tinkle! tinkle! tinkle!" sounded a tiny bell, and there stood the elf man.

"Good morning, Peter," he said. "Your lazy brothers did not get here in time, but I knew you would. So I have come to help you. Let's get to work."

How Peter and the elf man did work! They soon had Peter's bag full. Then three more bags that the elf man had brought.

"You may carry your bag home with you," said the elf man. "The other three bags you can hide in a hollow tree that I will show you. There they will be safe until you wish to carry them away."

Peter tried to thank his kind friend, but the elf man said: "No, no, Peter. Do not thank me. I helped you because you were such a good son. You now have all the gold you will ever need, so no more gold pieces will ever

be seen in the meadow. But I shall leave something here that you and your brothers may remember me."

As he said this, the elf man planted a piece of gold in the meadow. Than with a "Tinkle! tinkle! tinkle!" he disappeared.

Peter was now the richest man in the country. His mother grew well and strong again, but she no longer had to make baskets. Peter shared his gold with her and his brothers.

But I must tell you what grew from the piece of gold that the elf man planted in the meadow. First appeared some green leaves. Then a

bright golden flower, "just like Peter's gold pieces," Hans said, unfolded. After a few days the golden flower disappeared and in its place stood a silver ball. "Just the color of my silver pieces," said Carl. While the brothers looked at it, the wind swept by and the silver was gone.

"Oh," cried Hans, "I know what the elf man meant! If we work early, we find gold as Peter did. If we are late at work, we earn only silver like you, Carl. But if we sleep all day, we find just what I found — nothing."

Carl and Hans were ashamed of their lazy lives, and from that time on worked

early and late, helping all who needed their aid. Whenever they grew tired, they walked out to the meadow and looked at the "Elf Flower" and so never forgot the lesson it taught.

Would you like to look at this wonderful flower? You may easily do so. For it is our common dandelion. And now you know why the dandelion is first gold, then silver, then nothing.

Rewards & Judgments
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THE DRONES AND THE WORKERS

ONE day a party of drones got into a beehive. They claimed the honey and the honeycomb that they found there. They tried to drive the workers out.

But the workers said: "This is our honey and our honeycomb. We made the comb and gathered the honey ourselves. We will not let you have it."

So the drones and the workers began to fight.

After a while the workers said: "Let us ask Judge Wasp to settle the matter. He always judges wisely."

"Agreed," answered the drones, who were tired of fighting.

Off to Judge Wasp they flew.

"These drones are trying to steal our honey and honeycomb," said the workers.

"It is our honey and honeycomb," said the drones.

"No, it is ours," said the workers.

"It is ours! It is ours!" cried the drones.

"Be still, all of you," said Judge Wasp. "Let me think."

The drones and workers waited for a few minutes. Then Judge Wasp said: "Both parties must make and fill some comb before me. I can then tell which party makes honey like that in the hive."

At once the workers set to work. First they made the comb; then they filled it with honey.

The drones buzzed around for a short time, then they flew away.

"It is plain," said the wise judge, "that the honey belongs to the workers."

THE GOLDEN-ROD

A BUNCH of tall, green weeds grew in a field. The wild flowers that lived near would have nothing to do with them.

"How common these weeds are," they said. "They never have a flower. Don't let us speak to them." And they drew themselves up proudly.

The poor weeds heard these unkind remarks and drew nearer to the fence to get out of the way of their proud neighbors.

One warm day a poorly dressed man came into the field. He was old and feeble. As soon as they saw him, the weeds felt sorry for him.

"He looks poor and common like ourselves," they said.

But there was something very uncommon about this old man. He knew the language of the trees and flowers. Standing under the tall trees in the field, he said:

"Dear trees, I am tired. I have

walked many miles this warm day and I still have a long way to go. You see I am old and feeble. Will one of you please give me a staff on which to lean?"

"Give you a staff!" cried all the trees. "Break one of our branches for a poor old man like you! No, indeed! You will get no staff from us."

"Just a little one," begged the old man. "You grow so fast that a little branch will never be missed."

"Go away at once," said the trees. "You will get no staff from us."

The old man turned sadly away.

"Serves him right," said the wild

flowers. "Who would give anything to such a poor old man!" And they drew themselves away as he passed them.

The weeds had listened to every word that had been spoken. Their pity for the old man grew greater and greater.

"Old man," they called, "come here."

The old man tottered to the corner where the weeds grew.

"We are sorry for you," said the weeds. "If we had a good strong staff, we would give it to you; and what we have, we give you gladly. Right in the center you will find our

thickest stalk. It is not very big, but take it. It is perhaps better than no staff."

The old man bent over and cut the thickest stalk. Then he held it up, so that the trees and the wild flowers could see it.

As they looked upon it, a strange thing happened. Before their wondering eyes it turned into a rod of pure gold. Before a word could be spoken another strange change took place. A bright light shone around the old man for a minute. Then he, too, was changed. Instead of a poor old man, a beautiful fairy stood before them.

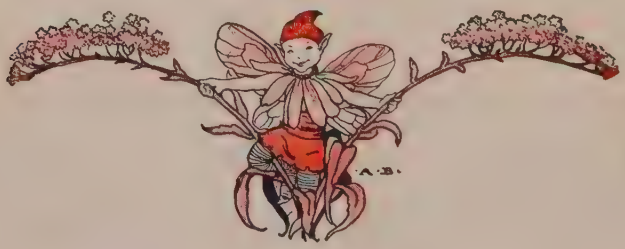
"I am the king of the trees and flowers," he said. "I wanted to find out if you were kind and loving. That is why I came to you, dressed like a poor old man. Only these poor weeds have shown me kindness; and I shall reward them."

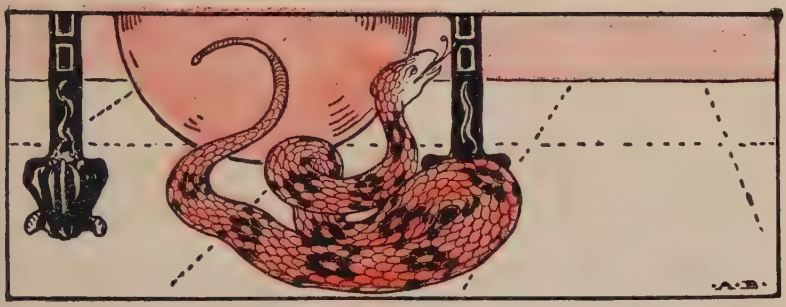
So saying, he touched the weeds

with the rod of gold, and they were covered with clusters of golden stars. No wild flower in the field was half so beautiful.

"Hereafter, you shall no longer be called 'common weeds,' but Golden-rod. And whenever trees, flowers, or people look at you, they shall remember your kindness to a poor old man."

And that is how we got our first golden-rod.





THE STONE OF GRATITUDE

MANY, many years ago there lived a very good king. All his people loved him because he was so kind and just. But alas! the poor king was blind.

"I cannot see if my people are unhappy," he said. "But I can always listen to their sorrows and help them."

So he said to his servants: "Hang

this great gong of brass before my palace gates. If any one is wronged, he may sound the gong. Then I will listen to his troubles and help him."

For years the great gong hung in its place. Many people sounded it, and the king listened to all. And every one — old and young, rich and poor — found the king ever kind and helpful.

One day the gong sounded. Out rushed a soldier to see who was there. What was his surprise to see a great snake striking the gong with its tail!

The soldier was about to drive it away, when the king came out.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"A great, ugly snake," said the soldier. "Shall I drive it away?"

"No," answered the king. "The gong is for every one who is wronged. Let the snake come forward and tell its tale."

The snake crept to the king's feet. Then she lifted her head and began to speak.

"O king," she said, "my nest is at the foot of yonder tall oak tree. In it my little ones and I were so happy. This morning I went to find food for my babies. When I came back to my nest, I found a strange beast in it. He had killed all my children and now claims my nest. I cannot drive him away, because he is covered with sharp needles. O king, will you not drive this wicked beast from my nest?"

"Indeed I will," said the king.

He at once sent a soldier to the

nest to kill the porcupine who had slain the baby snakes. Then he spoke a few kind words to the poor mother snake before she crept away to her sad, empty little home.

Late that night the palace was very still. Every one was asleep. If the soldiers before the doors had been awake, they would have heard a queer sound. "Swish! swish! swish!" it came — nearer and nearer to the palace. Up the steps, past the sleeping soldiers, glided the mother snake. In through the door she crept. Then through the halls, till she came to the king's room. Across the floor she

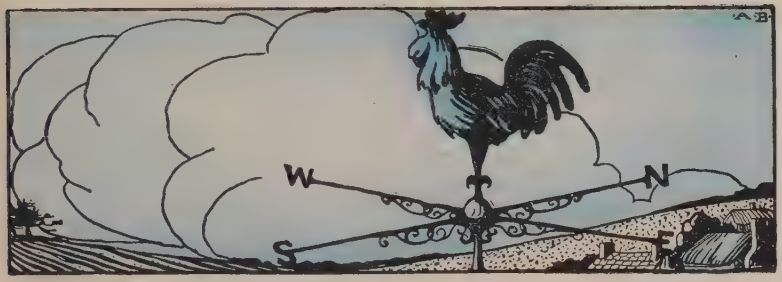
glided, up to the very bed on which the king slept.

She lifted her head and listened. The king never stirred. Very softly she laid upon each of the king's closed eyelids a shining topaz.

"Thus I thank the good king and pay him for his kindness to a poor snake," she whispered softly. Then she quietly and quickly glided from the room and from the palace back to her own little nest.

Next morning, when the king awoke, there was great joy in the palace. A wonderful, joyful thing had happened. The king was no longer blind. The mother snake had cured him.

And that is why the topaz is called the stone of gratitude.



THE GOLDEN COCK

"HE is the most beautiful young cock in the barnyard," said the gray hen.

The new cock strutted proudly and pretended he did not hear.

"He is the most beautiful cock that ever lived in this barnyard," said the white hen.

The new cock flapped his wings and crowed.

"Just listen!" said the black hen. "What a sweet voice he has!"

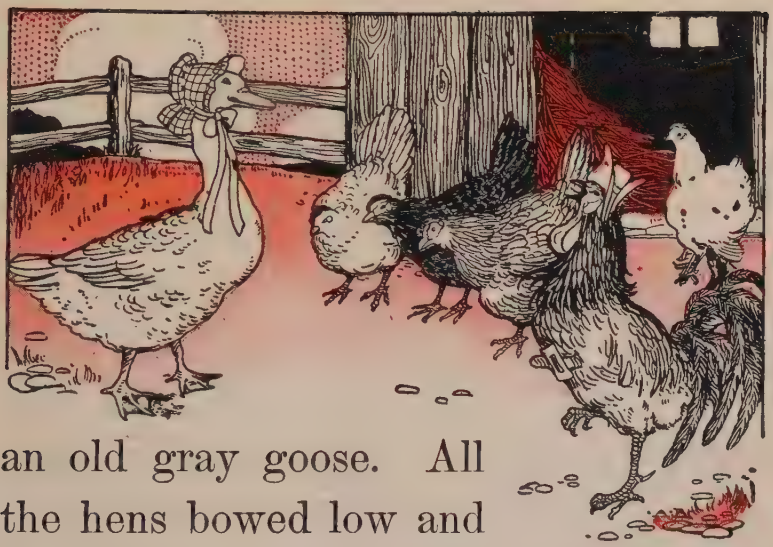
"And see his long, sharp spurs," said the brown hen.

By this time the new cock was so proud that he didn't know what to do. So he flapped his wings and crowed again.

"Look at his feathers," cried the old speckled hen. "When the sun shines on them, they look like gold."

"Gold! Who is talking about gold?" cackled a new voice.

The cock turned round. There stood



an old gray goose. All the hens bowed low and said, "Good day, dear Mrs. Goose."

The new cock stared in wonder. He thought it was right that all the hens should admire him. Who could help admiring such a fine fellow? But why should they all bow down to an old gray goose?

"Dear Mrs. Goose," said the black hen, pointing to the young cock, "this young cock has come to live in the barnyard. I hope you will like him."

"I may if he doesn't crow too often," said the old gray goose. "I hate to hear cocks crow. And" — pointing right at the young cock — "don't you crow too early in the morning." So saying, she walked proudly away.

The cock could scarcely believe his ears. Not like his crowing! His beautiful voice! How dare she say such a thing!

The hens crowded around him, all cackling at once.

"You must do just what she says," said the gray hen.

"Don't make her cross," said the black hen.

"We all try to please her," said the speckled hen.

"But why?" cried the cock.

"Because," said the white hen, "her great-great-great-grandmother once laid a golden egg."

"Golden egg!" said the cock. "What is golden?"

"Why, your feathers are golden when the sun shines on them," cried all the hens.

"Then," answered the cock, "if the

sun makes things golden, I shall have it turn me into a golden cock. A golden cock is more wonderful than a golden egg, I should say. And when I am a golden cock, every one in the barnyard, the old gray goose and all, must obey me."

Next morning the cock went to call on his friend the eagle.

"Dear Mr. Eagle," he said, "you can fly higher than any bird in the world. Can't you?"

"Yes," answered the eagle.

"Can you fly to the sun?"

"I never tried. But why do you ask?"

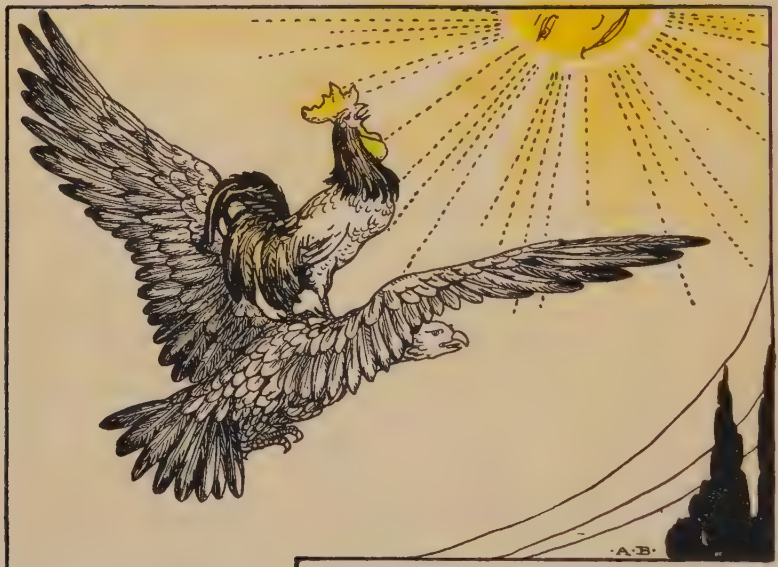
"Oh, Mr. Eagle, if I can only get to the sun, my feathers will be golden. Dear Mr. Eagle, kind Mr. Eagle, do try to fly to the sun and carry me with you."

"Very well, little cock, jump on my back, and I will do my best for you."

Up into the air flew Mr. Eagle, — above the houses, above the trees, above the highest mountain, above even the clouds, he flew!

"I am tired, little cock," he said, "I can fly no higher."

"Oh, please, Mr. Eagle, just try a little more."



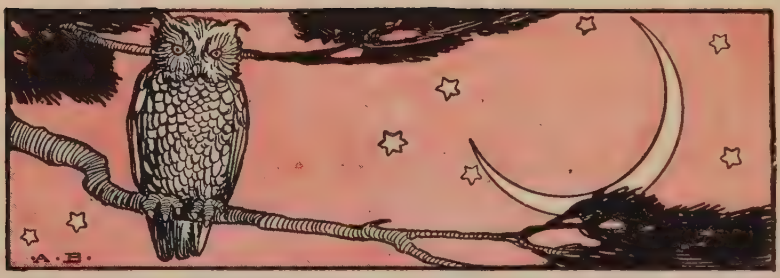
The eagle tried and flew a little nearer the sun.

"It is so hot, and I am so tired, I can go no higher," he said, at last; and dropped slowly to the earth.

But the cock jumped from the eagle's back, and flew right into the face of the sun! And the sun did turn him into a golden cock! But, oh, how heavy he was! Down, down he dropped right on to the point of a high church steeple, and there he stuck fast. And there he stands till this very day.

This is how we got our first cock weather vane.

The last I heard, the old gray goose was still ruling the barnyard.



WHY THE OWL SAYS "WHO"

LONG, long, long ago, the owl was one of the sweetest singers among the birds. More than that, he could speak the language of man. He was truly the wisest bird in the world. In those days he was not a night bird, but flew about in the bright sunshine and sang in the trees.

One day a great eagle flew down from his nest on a high mountain. He

was looking for food for his baby eagles. His bright eye soon spied a dear, wee baby rolling on the grass before a little house.

The eagle flew round and round. Then down he came. Quickly seizing the baby in his strong talons, he flew with it towards his nest.

On his way he saw the owl flying about. He was afraid the owl would tell who had carried off the baby, so he called to him: "See here, you little gray owl, don't tell any one that I stole this baby. If you do I'll, I'll —"

Now the owl was a great coward.

So he answered in a quaking voice: "Yes, Mr. Eagle, I hear. I'll never tell."

"Well, see that you don't," cried the eagle, as he rose higher and higher in the air. The baby's pitiful little cries grew fainter and fainter, and then died away.

The owl was just going to fly to his nest, when the baby's mother and father rushed into the woods. The man carried a strong club.

"There are the mother and father," said the owl to himself. "I must keep them talking here till the eagles have eaten the baby."

"Oh, owl! who has carried off my baby?" cried the poor mother.

"Who! Who! Who!" said the owl. And he stared with his round eyes, and looked very stupid.

"My baby! My dear baby!" cried the woman. "Who has carried him away?"

"Who! Who! Who!" mocked the owl.

"Speak out!" cried the father. "Have you seen any one carry off our baby? Tell me who did this cruel thing and I will kill him with my great club."

"Who! Who! Who!" repeated the owl.

He would have kept the man and woman talking until the eagles had eaten the child, but just then the fairy queen flew into the woods.

"My friends," she said, "your baby is safe. My people have killed the eagle who stole him. I hurried to tell you the glad news. See, here are my fairies now."

True enough, into the woods flew

about a hundred little fairies. They carried a quilt of thistledown. And on the quilt lay the baby, laughing and crowing and quite unhurt.

Quickly the mother seized her baby and clasped him to her breast, while she thanked the fairies again and again.

When he thought they were all too busy to notice him, the owl tried to fly away. But the fairy queen saw him.

"Hold!" she cried. "Owl, you are a coward. You would have allowed the eagles to tear this dear baby to pieces rather than tell the truth. You are not fit to sing and fly with the brave birds. Hereafter, you may fly only at night. And because you mocked this poor mother in her trouble and answered only 'Who, who, who' to her questions, you shall forget all your beautiful songs. You shall also forget the language of man. And forever and forever you and your children shall say nothing but 'Who! Who! Who!'"

The owl's great eyes began to blink. The sun hurt them. He tried to beg

the fairy queen to forgive him, but all he could say was "Who! Who! Who!"

He tried to fly to his nest, but the sun blinded him. He fluttered, dashing himself against the trees, till he fell into a hollow tree. There he stayed until it was dark.

So he lives by day in his hollow tree, and at night flies about looking for food, and often frightening people by calling, "Who! Who! Who!"

Lucky
Escapes

WHY THE CAT WASHES AFTER EATING

AN old gray cat was prowling about in the attic one day, when he caught a little mouse.

The little mouse was so frightened! He just squealed with fright!

"Why do you squeal so?" asked the cat.

"Because you hurt me. Oh, please, Mr. Cat, let me go!"

"Let you go?" said the cat. "Don't you know that I have been hunting you for days? I am going to eat you at once, and you had better stop squealing. Gentlemen do not squeal when they are hurt."

"Are you a gentleman?" asked the mouse.

"To be sure I am," said the cat, looking very proud.

"Then," said the mouse, "you are not going to eat me at once."

"And why not, pray?"

"Because gentlemen always wash before they eat."

"That's so," said the cat. And with-

out another word he began to wash his face and paws.

As soon as the little mouse saw the cat busy washing, he scampered off to his hole in the wall.

Mr. Cat stopped washing and sprang after the mouse. But it was too late. The little mouse was safe.

"Well," said pussy, as he walked downstairs, "it served me right. After this, I will eat a mouse when I catch it and wash my face after I have eaten."

And, if you will watch your kitty, you will see that this is true. For from that day all cats have washed their paws and faces after eating.

WHY TURTLES STAY NEAR THE WATER

ONE morning a wolf met a fox in the woods.

"Good morning, friend fox," he said. "Where are you going this fine morning?"

"I am going hunting," answered the fox. "I have had no breakfast."

"Then," said the wolf, "let us hunt together. I'll go this way and you go that way. If you find anything

good, you call me; and if I find anything good, I'll call you."

This pleased the fox, so they parted. Soon the wolf heard the fox calling to him.

"Come here, Brother Wolf! I have caught something good."

"What have you got, brother fox?" cried the wolf, as he ran to the fox.

"See," answered the fox. "It is a nice fat turtle. I have heard that turtle meat is very good to eat."

"So have I," said the wolf. "But now shall we get the meat? That big, heavy shell covers it."

"I will dig it out with this sharp stick," said the fox.

How frightened the turtle was! But do you think he let the fox and the wolf know? Not a bit of it.

"Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed. "Who is afraid of a sharp stick? Not I."

"No use of trying," said the wolf. "You can't get the meat out with a stick."

"Well, if the stick won't get the meat out, I know what I shall do. I'll break the shell with this big rock."

The turtle fairly shook with fear. But he did not show it.

"Ho! ho! ho!" he laughed. "Break my shell with a stone! You can't do it. I'm not afraid of all the stones in the world."

"I'll get him," said the wolf. "I'll make a big fire and burn him up."

When he heard this, the poor turtle almost died with fear. But still he laughed, though in a rather feeble way.

"He! he! he! Do you think you can frighten me with your old fire? How silly you are, Mr. Wolf!"

This made the wolf very angry. "I'll get you yet, old mud turtle," he said.

"Let us take him down to the river and drown him," said the fox.

When he heard this, the turtle pretended to be very much frightened.

"Oh, dear Mr. Wolf, oh, dear Mr. Fox," he begged, "please, please don't throw me into the river!"

"So you are afraid of the river, are you, old snapper?" said the fox. "Well, into the river you go."

Down to the river they dragged Mr. Turtle, and into the river they threw him.

"Splash!" went Mr. Turtle, as he struck the water. Away he swam to

a log near the middle of the river. There he sat and laughed and laughed and laughed.

"Oh, Mr. Fox and Mr. Wolf, I fooled you that time! This river is my home."

"Wait till the next time we catch you up in the woods. You won't get away so easily," yelled the wolf.

"You will never see me in the woods again," answered the turtle. "After this, I will stay where I belong, — near the water."

And from that day to this, no one has ever seen a turtle very far away from the water.

HOW THE OAK LEAVES CAME TO HAVE NOTCHES

ONCE upon a time a young man sat under an oak tree beside the road. He seemed very sad.

Along the road came a little black dwarf. He saw the young man and walked up to him.

"Good morning, my young friend," he said. "Why are you so sad?"

"Ah, me!" said the young man, "I am most unhappy! I have no money, and the fair Gretchen will not marry me because I am so ugly."

"If that is all, cheer up," said the dwarf. "I think I can help you. What is your name?"

"Hans; but how can you help me?"

"Do you see this little bottle? If I let you drink but three drops of the water in it, you will become very handsome. Then the fair Gretchen will marry you at once. Besides, I

shall give you this purse, which will always be full of money."

"Will you really?" asked Hans. "Oh, please give them to me at once!"

"Wait," said the dwarf. "Before I give you the water and the purse, you must promise something."

"What?" asked Hans.

"Only this — at the end of a year you must come away with me and be my servant."

Hans thought a moment. "A year from now? That will be the spring-time. I cannot go with you then. I shall be busy planting my garden," he said.

"Well," answered the dwarf, "I will wait until the summer."

"No," said Hans, "I can't go in the summer. Then I shall be busy taking care of my garden."

"Shall I come in the autumn?" asked the dwarf.

"That will not do either," answered Hans. "I shall be busy gathering nuts in autumn."

The dwarf looked very cross. "Then I shall come in the winter," he said.

Now Hans did not want to go with the dwarf in the winter, either. But he did not know what to say. He

thought and thought. At last he said:—

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I will go away with you when the leaves are all gone from the oak tree."

"Agreed!" said the dwarf. "Here is the purse and here is the bottle."

Hans put the purse in his pocket. He drank three drops from the bottle. At once he became the handsomest young man in the land.

"Give me back my bottle," said the dwarf. "I will come for you when the leaves are gone from the oak tree. And now, good-by."

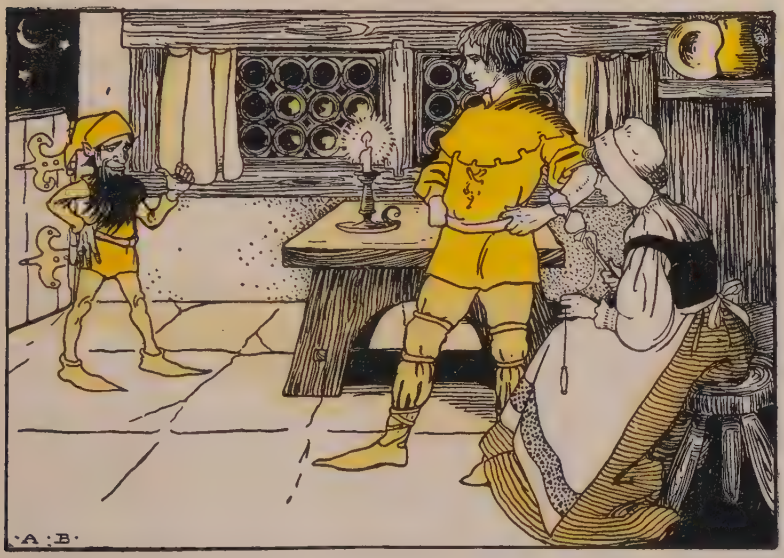
Before Hans could answer, the dwarf was gone.

Everything happened just as the dwarf had said. The fair Gretchen married Hans because he was so handsome. The purse was never empty. So they were rich and happy.

Spring passed; summer passed; and autumn came. The leaves turned red and golden and dropped from the trees.

One evening Hans and Gretchen sat in their pretty home. A knock was heard at the door. Hans opened it. There stood the black dwarf.

"Good evening, friend Hans," he said. "I have come for you."



"I am ready," said Hans. "But first we will go and see if the leaves have gone from the oak tree."

Out into the woods they walked.

The other trees were bare, but the oak tree was still covered with leaves. To be sure, the leaves were brown and dry, but they still clung to the branches.

"It is not yet time for me to go with you," said Hans.

The dwarf stamped his foot in anger.

"I will get you yet," he shouted. Then he rushed from the woods.

Autumn passed, and it was winter. One cold night there came a knocking at the door. When Hans opened it, there stood the dwarf.

"Come, Hans," he said. "It is time for you to go away with me."

"First we will visit the oak tree," said Hans.

Into the forest they walked, and the moon gave them light. Under the oak tree the ground was covered with snow. But the dry leaves still clung to the branches.

The dwarf looked at them. Then, with a frightful howl, he rushed from the woods.

The springtime came. Once more the dwarf knocked at the young man's door.

"I have come for you, Hans!" he roared, and his ovice sounded like the loudest thunder; and his face was as black as the darkest night.

Hans came out to meet him.

"I am ready," he said. "But you must remember our bargain. Come and see the oak tree."

Soon they reached the old tree. It was covered with the tiny buds of the new green leaves. But the old leaves, brown and dry, still clung to the branches.

"See," said Hans, "the new leaves will be out before the old ones drop from the branches."

The dwarf roared in anger. In his rage, he rushed at the oak tree and bit and tore the leaves with his teeth. Through the woods he ran, biting and

tearing all the oak leaves he could see. And that is why the oak leaves are notched.

Hans never saw the dwarf again; and he and Gretchen were rich and happy as long as they lived.

Some
Wishes

THE LAZY RACCOON

ONCE upon a time there was a little raccoon. He was the laziest little raccoon in the world. While the other animals were working, he sat all day long just wishing.

One morning he sat under a tree. The other animals had all had breakfast long ago. But the little raccoon was too lazy to look for food, although he was very hungry.

"I wish I had a great big pumpkin pie," he said.

Now it happened that the Wish Fairy was standing near and heard his wish. She made up her mind to teach that lazy little raccoon a lesson. So she put a great big pumpkin pie into his paws.

How surprised he was! And how pleased!

"My!" he said, "that looks good. I wish I had a great big mouth, so that I could eat it all at once."

The Wish Fairy touched his mouth, and it grew so big! It stretched from ear to ear.

The raccoon swallowed the pie in one mouthful.

How the other animals laughed when they saw the little raccoon's big mouth!

"Oh, look at Mr. Raccoon!" they cried. "What a big mouth he has!"

Mr. Raccoon was ashamed of his big mouth, and tried to cover it with his paws. But, as his mouth was very big and his paws were very little, he couldn't. So he said,—

"I wish I had great big paws so that I could cover my great big mouth."

The Wish Fairy touched first one paw, then the other, and they grew big.

"Oh, just look at Mr. Raccoon!" cried all the other animals. "What a great big mouth he has! And what great big paws!" And they laughed louder than before.

Oh, how ashamed Mr. Raccoon felt! He started to run away into the deep

woods to hide. But all the other animals ran after him, mocking him and laughing at him.

"I wish," cried Mr. Raccoon, "I wish I had great big long legs so that I could run faster than any other animal in the forest."

The Wish Fairy touched one leg, and it grew long. She touched the other leg, and that grew long.

Then how the other animals did laugh!

"Oh, just look at Mr. Raccoon!" they cried. "What a big mouth, what great paws, and what long legs he has!"

Mr. Raccoon ran and ran till he

came to the deepest, darkest place in the forest. He drew a paw along his great big mouth, and one little tear rolled down his cheek. He looked at his great big paws, and another little tear rolled down his cheek. He looked at his great long legs, and then he threw himself on the ground, and cried and cried and cried.

When she saw this, the Wish Fairy flew to him.

"Why are you crying, Mr. Raccoon?" she asked.

"Oh, just look at my big mouth and my big paws and my long legs!" said poor Mr. Raccoon.

"Did you not wish for them?" asked the fairy.

"Yes, yes," sobbed Mr. Raccoon. "But how I wish I might have just one more wish!"

"What would you wish for this time?" asked the Wish Fairy.

"I would like to be my own self again, with my little mouth, my little paws, and my short legs," answered Mr. Raccoon.

"If I grant this wish, will you promise never to wish again?"

"Never, never, never!" cried poor Mr. Raccoon.

"And will you promise to work?"

"Yes, good fairy! Only change me back, and I promise that no animal in the forest will work harder than I."

The Wish Fairy touched his long legs, and they grew short. She touched his great big paws, and they grew small. She touched his great wide mouth, and it grew little.

"There, I have granted your last wish," she said. "Remember your promise."

And Mr. Raccoon did remember his promise. From that day to this no one ever heard him wish again. And no animal worked harder than he.

JUPITER AND THE BEE

A BEE once made Jupiter a present of a pot of honey. The gift pleased Jupiter very much.

"Little bee," he said, "I thank you for your gift. Now I shall give you a present. Ask whatever you wish, and I will give it to you."

The bee thought for a minute, then he said, "O Jupiter, give me a sharp sting, that I may stab whom I will."

This wish did not please Jupiter. He did not like to leave man at the mercy of the spiteful bee. He was angry because the bee was so cruel.

Yet, because he had promised, he had to grant the bee's wish.

After thinking for a minute or two, he said: "Little bee, your wish is granted. But be careful how you use your sting, for wherever you plant it you will leave it, and with it lose your own life."

That is how the bee got his sting. And now you know why he never stings any one who leaves him alone.

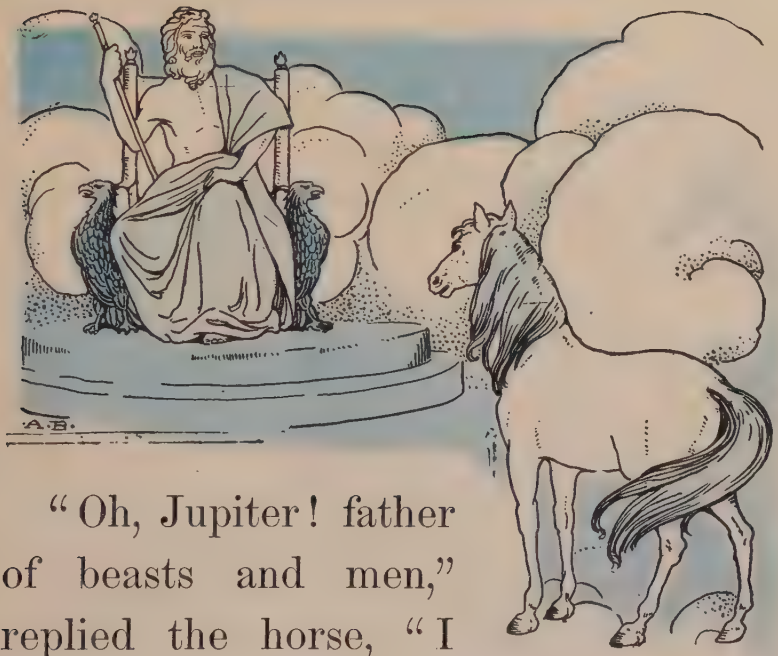
HOW WE GOT THE FIRST CAMEL

ONE summer morning in the long, long ago time, a horse stood beside a calm lake. He seemed to be studying his reflection in the water. From the way he stamped and tossed his mane, one would think

he was not pleased with the picture reflected there. And yet he was a beautiful horse with long, flowing mane and tail, a glossy coat, and dainty hoofs.

At last he turned from the lake and trotted swiftly away. Over rivers, through woods, across plains, he trotted, never stopping till he reached the home of Jupiter on the top of the highest mountain. Straight up to Jupiter's throne he trotted, and then stood waiting for permission to speak.

"What is the matter, friend horse?" asked Jupiter. "Speak, and tell us what brings you here in such haste."



"Oh, Jupiter! father of beasts and men," replied the horse, "I know I am one of the most beautiful of the animals you have created. But yet I am not content. I would be more beautiful."

"Pray, speak freely," said Jupiter.

"What changes do you desire? Name them, and, if possible, I shall grant your prayer."

"I know I could run faster if my legs were longer and more slender," said the horse.

"Quite true," replied Jupiter. "Is there anything more?"

"Yes," answered the horse. "I would be more beautiful if I had a long, swanlike neck."

"Perhaps," said Jupiter; "continue."

"I would be stronger if my chest were broader," replied the horse.

Here he stopped to hear what Jupiter might say to this, but Jupiter

seemed lost in thought and answered not a word.

The horse continued, "Since I am made to carry man, thy favorite creature, would it not be well if my saddle grew on my back?"

"Let me see," replied Jupiter. "You would like your legs to be longer and more slender, your neck longer and like a swan's, your chest broader, and your saddle fastened to your back. Is that all?"

"Oh, yes! Great Jupiter. That is all I ask," said the horse.

"Come again to-morrow," said Jupiter, "and I will show you an animal

like the one you have described. Then, if you still wish to change your form, I shall grant your desire."

The next day the horse eagerly sought Jupiter's throne. A strange, new animal stood near. When he saw it, the horse was frightened and trembled so that he could scarcely stand.

"Well, friend horse," asked Jupiter, "what do you think of this new creature?"

"Oh, it is terrible!" answered the horse. "It fills me with fear and disgust."

"Why, what can you mean? Do

you not want me to change you into a like creature?" asked Jupiter.

"No, no, no!" cried the horse. "I would rather look like the meanest

creature that crawls than like that monster."

"But he is exactly like the horse you wished to be," said Jupiter.

"Never! never!" cried the horse.

"Look at his legs," said Jupiter. "Are they not long and slender? And just see how fast he can run."

As Jupiter spoke, the strange creature ran swiftly over a broad plain and back again in much less time than the horse could have run the same distance.

"True," said the horse, "his legs are long and slender and he can run fast, but —"

"And is not his neck long and swanlike?" asked Jupiter.

"Yes, but—"

"Is not his chest broad?"

"It is, but, oh—"

"And look at his back. Just see those humps! Could one have a more perfect saddle?"

"True, all true," cried the poor horse. "But, oh, Jupiter! please, please do not turn me into such a horrible looking creature. I am contented now. I shall always be contented. Pray, drive that creature from the earth."

"Not so," replied Jupiter. "On the

earth he shall stay as a warning to you and all creatures to be content, now and for all times."

And this is how the first camel was made. From that day to this, horses have trembled with fear at their first sight of the camel.

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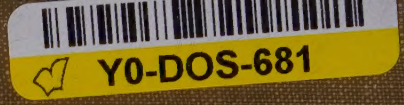
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